

1879.

[For Private Circulation.]

REPORT OF AID
GIVEN TO
DESTITUTE MOTHERS AND INFANTS.

We testify to the need of this charity, and believe that the money given to it will be faithfully and judiciously expended.

S. M. CRAWFORD, M. D., Resident Physician of N. E. Hospital for Women and Children

CHARLES P. PUTNAM, M. D., Physician of Mass. Infant Asylum.

W. L. RICHARDSON, M. D., Visiting Physician, Boston Lying-In Hospital.

REPORT.

In giving our report for 1879, we have little to add to the statement made last year. We are now in the sixth year of our work, and we hope and believe that the experience of the last five years has taught us something in regard to a perplexing question, "How to give assistance to destitute mothers, both married and unmarried, without increasing vice, or promoting pauperism?"

Our work divides itself naturally into three parts. We undertake:—

*" 1st. To give a short convalescence to any mother discharged with a young infant from a maternity hospital, no longer requiring medical care, but not yet able to work, and without means to procure the two or three weeks' rest so much needed at this period. Also, occasionally, previous to the admission of applicants to these hospitals, to pay their board for a week or two, in case they are without a home, friendless, and penniless.

" 2d. To find good boarding-places for those infants whose mothers are engaged in domestic service, or earning their living in any way which prevents their retaining the infants under their personal care, and to visit children so placed, in order to be sure that they have the attention which they require. Occasionally, also, a mother who lives in her own home receives temporary assistance.

" 3d. Especially to watch over and befriend those unmarried mothers, who, not yet depraved, are in danger of falling into evil from their peculiarly exposed and friendless condition. A large proportion of these are girls under twenty years of age.

" It should be remembered that our charity does not include the depraved and hardened. The desire to retain the charge of

* All enclosed in quotation marks is taken from the last report.

her child, and the willingness to do her utmost for its support, are made the conditions of helping an unmarried mother. If any one applies for aid, expecting to be relieved from the support of her child, she is refused.

“Occasionally a home is found for a mother in a family who are willing to receive her infant also, in consideration of a reduction in wages. We have usually found such an arrangement very satisfactory to the employer, and it would materially assist our work, if more situations of this kind might be obtained. May we hope that those into whose hands this report may fall will kindly bear this in mind?

“It has always been a great difficulty to arrange for such patients as are thrown upon our charity two or three months previous to their admission to one of the maternity hospitals. It is a period of great danger to them, since, if cast adrift, they almost inevitably fall into the hands of those who would willingly give them shelter in order to obtain power over them, offering kindness in the moment of their greatest need, not displaying until later their real motives, when the victim is unable to escape. A young girl is perhaps turned out of her place by the employer who has discovered her situation, and has neither parents nor friends to whom she can apply for shelter. To pay her board for a month or two, is very objectionable; beside consuming a great deal of money, it is injurious to the patient physically and morally. Her health suffers from the want of the active employment to which she has been accustomed — her mind from the deteriorating effects of long idleness. To allow her to go to the almshouse for this period would be almost certain ruin from the contaminating effect of bad associates; to find employment for her in a family who will let her pay for her board by work is the best arrangement that can be made, and we find it easier to do this than was formerly the case.

“We frequently hear it said, that helping this class of patients ‘encourages vice.’ But the more we study the question in all its practical workings, the more we feel that the danger of at

least *increasing*, if not encouraging vice, lies in not helping them. It may be difficult to decide what is the best method of giving help, but if nothing be done to assist these young girls to lead a virtuous life, those will not be found wanting who would gladly teach them vice; and if left without resource, the danger is very great that a comparatively innocent and well-meaning girl may become a depraved and reckless woman.

“God has placed in our hands the means of helping and saving these young sisters of ours. The method is simple, natural, effective. The love of the mother for her child is her shield and safeguard. In many cases this feeling is very strong from the moment of the child’s birth; in others it is a seedling which needs to be nursed into life and strength; in very few, indeed, is it plainly deficient. Is it not right and wise to respect this purifying instinct, and work in harmony with it?

“We are sometimes asked what are the chief difficulties that we encounter in our work. One of the greatest obstacles we meet is the influence sometimes exercised by employers, in direct opposition to what we regard as important to keep the mother in a healthful state of mind. After a young woman has gone to a situation in a family (usually in these cases a wet-nurse’s situation, so that she earns high wages and has consequently less difficulty than others in supporting her infant), it is discouraging to find that the employer is using all her influence to induce the young mother to give up the idea of supporting her child, and to apply for its admission to some charitable institution. Such advice is kindly intended, but we have seen in many cases the unfortunate result of this course. We have sometimes wished for the opportunity to beg such employers to pause before taking upon themselves so fearful a responsibility, and at least inform themselves by consulting those who have had an opportunity to study the question, whether good is likely to ensue from the course they propose. For ourselves, we have found that those unmarried mothers who have been deprived of the care of their infants, either by death or by complete separation, are in much greater danger of falling into sin than those who feel the respon-

sibility of their care. For a mother who has lost her child, or been induced to give it up, we feel much anxiety. For one who visits her infant regularly and does what she can for its support, comparatively little. And indeed, many people are ignorant of the difficulty of obtaining admission for an infant into any institution where it will receive good care. These institutions receive so many applications that they are obliged to refuse a far greater number than they accept. And they give the preference to those who are in peculiarly destitute circumstances; as to an orphan, the child of very poor parents who have a large family, or to one whose parents are unable from illness to work for its support. It is doing a mother no kindness to try to undermine the feeling which makes it comparatively easy and pleasant to work for her child, when it is more than probable that she must continue to work for it whether willingly or otherwise."

As our charity becomes more known each year, we undergo the usual experience of those who work for similar objects; we receive a larger number of applications without a corresponding increase of means. A very large number are necessarily refused. In selecting those we assist, we are governed chiefly by these considerations:—

1st. The love of the mother for her infant, and corresponding desire to support it and retain it in her care.

2d. The urgent necessity and danger of those young unmarried girls, who are without friends who can assist them. This class are usually orphans.

3d. The temporary poverty which is the occasional misfortune of most respectable married women, who often need only a little help for two or three weeks until tided over this period.

On the other hand we refuse:—

1st. Those who are actually depraved.

2d. Those who regard the care of their infants as a burden from which they wish to be relieved.

3d. Those who, having earned good wages for a considerable time previous to the application, have neglected the oppor-

tunity to save money, and thus have less claim than others to receive charity.

4th. Those who have relatives able to assist them.

5th. Those who appear to be permanent paupers (a certain class of women familiar to workers in all charities).

A large number receive *assistance* without receiving money. This help is given in the shape of advice, sympathy, instruction in the care of infants, medical aid from benevolent physicians, visiting of infants in their boarding-places by the lady visitors, free beds in hospitals, homes in families who receive our patients when they are unable to earn money, and allow them to work for their board,—and employment of various kinds. Sometimes we include in our list, printed at the end of the report, all those assisted thus without money. It is however difficult to make an exact record of these cases, but the number has been larger during 1879 than during any previous year.

What we most need to aid us in carrying on our work as we would wish, are : —

1st. Situations for young unmarried girls in families where they may work for their board previous to their admission to the hospitals.

2d. Situations for mothers where their infants may also be received, either with low wages or without wages.

3d. Money to relieve the necessity of those who are temporarily disabled from work by illness, and of those who are able to earn only a portion of what is needed for their infant's board.

We desire to return our most cordial thanks to all the friends from whom we have received assistance, either in money or gifts of clothing; and we feel that we owe our especial debt of gratitude to the physicians whose generous kindness to both mothers and infants has been so invaluable.

For the visitors,

MRS. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

MRS. WILLIAM BRADLEY.

RECEIVED DURING 1879.

Ames, Miss Helen,	\$ 50.00	May, Mrs. Samuel,	10.00
Bradley, Mrs. Wm.,	2.00	Minot, Dr. Francis,	10.00
Cabot, Dr. S.,	25.00	Minot, Miss Mary,	5.00
Child, Mrs. L. M.,	20.00	Motte, Mrs. E. L.,	8.00
Clarke, Mrs. E. C.,	10.00	Paine, Mrs. C. J.,	50.00
Clarke, J. Freeman,	50.00	Parkman, John,	5.00
Clarke, Miss L.,	10.00	Parkman, Miss M. R.,	10.00
Coolidge, Mrs. J. T.,	10.00	Phillips, Miss A. D.,	25.00
Coolidge, Mrs. T. Jefferson,	25.00	Richardson, Mrs. Jeffrey,	25.00
Dabney, Misses M. & Z.,	8.00	Shaw, Mrs. G. H.,	20.00
Davis, Miss A. W.,	10.00	Shaw, Henry S.,	10.00
Dresel, Mrs. Otto,	20.00	Towne, Miss A. N.,	18.00
Emerson, Mrs. R. W.,	10.00	Towne, Mrs. M. R.,	20.00
Endicott, Wm. jr.,	50.00	Wales, Miss M. A.,	10.00
Eustis, Mrs. W. E. C.,	40.00	Ware, Dr. C. E.,	100.00
Fields, Mrs. J. T.,	10.00	White, Miss Amy,	5.00
Greene, Mrs. W. B.,	650.00	Wigglesworth, Dr. E.,	10.00
Grew, H. S.,	25.00	Williams, Miss Ann,	5.00
Grew, Mrs. H. S.,	25.00	Wolcott, Mrs. J. H.,	25.00
Hemenway, Mrs. A.,	100.00	B. W.,	10.00
Higginson, Geo.,	200.00	A Friend,	200.00
Higginson, Mrs. Waldo,	10.00	A Subscriber,	600.00
Holmes, Mrs. O. W.,	5.00	A Friend,	1.40
Hooper, Miss Alice S.,	100.00	A Gift, by Dr. C. P. Putnam,	50.00
Hooper, Mrs. S.,	100.00	Interest on Bond, (Gift of	
Huidekoper, Miss E. G.,	20.00	Mrs. W. B. Greene),	60.00
Kimball, Miss Helen,	5.00	Repaid by persons assisted,	71.00
Lamb, Miss Rose,	10.00		
Lobdell, Miss E. S.,	3.00		\$3,396.40
Lyman, Mrs. Arthur T.,	25.00	Balance Due Treasurer,	3.01
Mason, Miss E. F.,	200.00		
Mason, Miss I. M.,	200.00		\$3,399.41
May, Miss A. W.,	5.00		

From a Friend, a large bundle of clothing for women.

Miss H. Smith, clothing for infants.

Miss E. G. Huidekoper, clothing for infants.

Miss Jane Barber, clothing for infants (flannels).

Mrs. E. C. Clarke, clothing for infants.

Mrs. H. W. Pickering, clothing for infants.

EXPENDED DURING 1879.

Overdrawn last years account,	\$ 3.00	Advertising,	24.80
Board of infants,	1,308.70	Medicine,	39.65
Board of women,	709.10	Physicians' fees,	19.50
Fares and travelling,	251.02	Burial of infants,	23.75
Clothing for women,	62.65	Printing, etc.,	19.87
Clothing for infants,	211.10	Sundries,	136.35
Food and milk for infants,	382.39	Assistant's salary,	156.00
Furniture,	51.53		<hr/>
			\$3,399.41

Subscriptions may be sent to Mrs. James Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass., or to Dr. C. P. Putnam, 63 Marlborough St., Boston.

ASSISTED DURING 1879.

Whole number assisted,	123	Irish,	12
Old cases (continued from 1878),	30	British Provinces,	17
New cases (taken in 1879),	93	Swedish,	4
	123	Scotch,	3
		English,	1
Married women, new cases,	28	German,	1
Unmarried " " "	65	French American,	1
	—	English American,	1
	93	German American,	1
		Colored,	1
		Unknown,	1
NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN.			—
(New cases.)			65
American,	6	AGES OF UNMARRIED WOMEN.	
Irish American,	3	16 years old,	1
Irish,	11	18 " "	6
English,	2	19 " "	15
British Provinces,	2	20 " "	11
French American,	1	21 " "	7
Swedish,	1	22 " "	9
Colored,	1	23 " "	3
Jewess,	1	24 " "	5
	—	25 " "	3
	28	Over 25 years old,	2
NATIONALITY OF UNMARRIED WOMEN.		Unknown,	3
(New cases.)*			—
American,	9		65
Irish American,	13		

* Ages and Nationality of cases taken in 1878, given in last report.

